

But while we struggle to change the United States, to make it into a more just and equitable society, we also need to make sure that no American goes hungry.

I want to commend, today, the Vermont Foodbank for its years of exemplary service to fighting hunger. The Vermont Foodbank serves food shelves, community kitchens, homeless shelters, domestic abuse programs and programs which provide services for the elderly and children. Well over 100,000 people are served through Foodbank's network of 295 agencies each year. From its building in Barre, the Foodbank supplies agencies and NGOs all over Vermont with food for those who are hungry. It is greatly assisted in its work by hundreds of volunteers, who contributed over 23,000 hours—over 11 years of work weeks—in just the past year alone.

The Vermont Foodbank helps assure that none among us go hungry, that every community group and agency that seeks to combat hunger has a resource upon which it can call. It, together with our many community food banks, the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, the work of shelters, the Salvation Army, churches, and countless other groups, is doing essential, life-sustaining work in throughout our State.

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY TAX REDUCTION ACT AND THE SENIOR CITIZENS' TAX ELIMINATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce two pieces of legislation to reduce taxes on senior citizens. The first bill, the Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act, repeals the 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. Repealing this increase on Social Security benefits is a good first step toward reducing the burden imposed by the federal government on senior citizens. However, imposing any tax on Social Security benefits is unfair and illogical. This is why I am also introducing the Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act, which repeals all taxes on Social Security benefits.

Since Social Security benefits are financed with tax dollars, taxing these benefits is yet another example of double taxation. Furthermore, "taxing" benefits paid by the government is merely an accounting trick, a shell game which allows members of Congress to reduce benefits by subterfuge. This allows Congress to continue using the Social Security trust fund as a means of financing other government programs, and masks the true size of the federal deficit.

Instead of imposing ridiculous taxes on senior citizens, Congress should ensure the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by ending the practice of using trust fund monies for other programs. In order to accomplish this goal I introduced the Social Security Preservation Act (H.R. 219), which ensures that all money in the Social Security trust fund is spent solely on Social Security. At a time when Congress' inability to control spending is once again threatening the Social Security trust fund, the need for this legislation has never been greater. When the government

taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to help free senior citizens from oppressive taxation by supporting my Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act and my Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act. I also urge my colleagues to ensure that moneys from the Social Security trust fund are used solely for Social Security benefits and not wasted on frivolous government programs.

REINTRODUCTION OF H.R. 40, COMMISSION TO STUDY REPARATIONS PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to re-introduce H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act, along with 22 original cosponsors. Since I first introduced H.R. 40 in 1989, we have made substantial progress in elevating this issue in the national consciousness. Through legislation, state and local resolutions, and litigation, we are moving closer to a full dialogue on the role of slavery in building this country.

Across the nation, three state legislatures: Louisiana, California and Florida, have passed resolutions supporting H.R. 40. Another three states: New Jersey, New York and Texas, have legislation pending. At the local level, the legislation has gained similar support, with 12 major cities having passed similar supporting resolutions.

However, despite this progress, the legacy of slavery lingers heavily in this nation. While we have focused on the social effects of slavery and segregation, its continuing economic implications have been largely ignored by mainstream analysis. These economic issues are the root cause of many critical issues in the African-American community today, such as education, healthcare, and crime. The call for reparations represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in shaping present-day conditions in our community and American society.

H.R. 40 is designed to create a formal dialogue on the issue of reparations through the establishment of a national commission to examine the institution of slavery. The commission will study the impact of slavery and continuing discrimination against African-Americans, resulting directly and indirectly from slavery, during the apartheid of reconstruction, desegregation, and the present day. The commission would also make recommendations concerning any form of apology and compensation to begin the long delayed process of atonement.

The issue of reparations remains sensitive in many communities because of the basic question of money. Statements dismissing reparations on the grounds of payment issues, however, are completely premature, especially when we have not yet had a national dialogue

or study of the area. Economists have told us that the value of slave labor to the American economy and potential damages are greater than \$7 trillion. Such a staggering sum indicates that the discussion of reparations must be about something other than money.

However, I must stress that the reparations issue is not about a check to individuals. The call for reparations represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in shaping American society. Everyone profited from the labor of the slaves, even later immigrants, because slave labor and the taxes from those enterprises built the infrastructure of this nation. The debt we talk about is not centuries old, but dates back only a few decades and is within our lifetimes because of Jim Crow.

This nation must make a commitment to understanding how the legacy of slavery and its vestiges contribute to present day societal and economic inequality. That is why I re-introduce H.R. 40 at the opening of every Congress and sponsor a forum on reparations during every Congressional Black Caucus legislative conference. We must be diligent in our efforts to educate this nation about its history. I hope that in this 109th Congress, we can schedule formal hearings on this legislation to begin the process of having our nation finally acknowledge its debt.

DENTON RANKS 1ST AMONG MOST-TECHNOLOGY-ADVANCED CITIES

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to recognize Denton, Texas for being acknowledged as the No. 1 most technology-advanced city with a population of 75,000 to 124,999, by the Center for Digital Government. The ranking was based on the 2004 Digital Cities Survey that examines how city governments are using digital technology to become more efficient and communicate with residents.

The survey and ranking determined by the Center asked more than 600 mayors, managers and chief information officers to participate asking 24 questions focusing on implementation, adoption of online service delivery, planning and governance, and the network that allows cities to make the move to digital government.

A life-long resident of Denton County, I offer my congratulations to the city of Denton and to Mayor Euline Brock.

COMPANY THAT DOES IT RIGHT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention a remarkable company, located in my home state of Vermont, that can and should serve as a model for corporate responsibility in this era so unfortunately marked by greed of CEO's, who last year paid themselves 301 times as much as the average worker in their companies.